

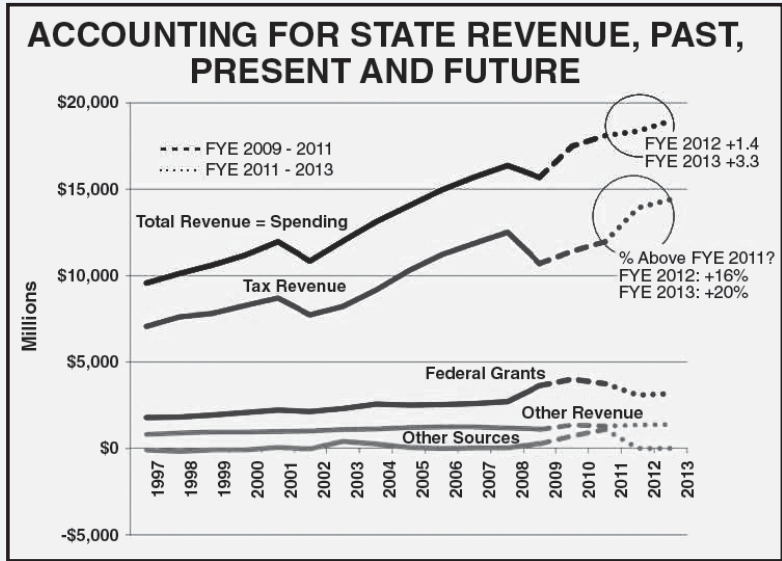
State Budget

Despite the no tax increase proposals offered by the General Assembly’s Republicans, the legislative majority recently pushed through a two-year \$37.6 billion state budget that relies on increased spending, new taxes and irresponsible borrowing that I could not support. Their budget:

- Fails to significantly cut state spending, while increasing costs overall;
- Raises taxes by \$1 billion, including a 30% tax increase on those who earn more than \$500,000 a year, a 10% tax surcharge on larger companies, and a \$1 per pack increase on cigarettes;
- Relies on one-time revenues, such as federal stimulus money, and drains the state’s Rainy Day Fund;
- Requires \$1.3 billion in new borrowing;
- Reduces state grants to towns and cities by \$44.7 million; and
- Significantly raises the cost of a large variety of state fees and licenses by doubling fees under \$150, increasing fees between \$150 and \$1,000 by 25%, and adding \$250 to fees of \$1,000 or more.

This budget does make some welcome changes to the estate tax. The threshold has been increased from \$2 million to \$3.5 million, the “cliff” has been eliminated, and the estate tax rates reduced by 25%. However, I will continue to work for the complete elimination of this burdensome tax which encourages those who contribute so much to leave Connecticut.

Furthermore, this budget calls for reducing the sales tax by 0.5% beginning in January if tax revenues do not fall too far below expectations. However, as the budget passed in September is already significantly in deficit, it is unlikely that Connecticut residents will see this new tax relief anytime soon.



State spending is growing faster than revenue
Source: Governor’s Council of Economic Advisors, November 12, 2009

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TONI BOUCHER

STATE SENATOR



STATE SENATOR
TONI BOUCHER

ASSISTANT MINORITY LEADER

2009 LEGISLATIVE REPORT



★★★ 26TH DISTRICT ★★★
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Weston ★ Westport ★ Wilton

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STATE SENATOR TONI BOUCHER

Dear Friends:

Our nation and state have experienced the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression, leaving Connecticut facing a massive state budget deficit.

In a period of two weeks, I personally met with more than 2,000 constituents, organizations, small business owners and local elected officials who voiced their concerns about the state's ongoing fiscal problems. An overwhelming majority of them oppose the \$37.6 billion biennial state budget passed in early September because it significantly raises taxes, relies on one-time gimmicks, drains the state's savings account, and requires a great deal of borrowing.

In other words, rather than follow the good example of families and businesses that have cut expenses to make ends meet, the majority leadership of our General Assembly actually chose to increase spending and push our state further into debt. I spoke out vigorously against this course of action – and voted against it – at every opportunity.

Our state government is now facing a projected \$624 million deficit for this fiscal year. Be assured that I stand ready to work in a bipartisan manner with Governor Rell and my legislative colleagues to stem the tide of red ink and do what is necessary to finally provide Connecticut with a responsible, affordable, state budget.

It is not all bad news, though. While the fierce budget battle dominated this year's legislative session, the General Assembly also addressed many other issues and I hope you will take a few minutes to read my report. As always, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Toni Boucher
State Senator, 26th District



2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Good News For Our Communities

After 12 years of hard work, I helped to secure funding to improve our mass transit system, including \$30 million for the Danbury Branch Line Centralized Train Control and Signalization Project, and additional funds to make capital improvements to train stations including Westport, Greens Farms, Bethel, West Redding, Branchville, Cannondale, Wilton, New Canaan, and Talmadge Hill.

In addition, I helped to secure passage of new legislation that will improve the quality of life in our communities, including laws to:

- Dedicate part of Route 33 as the "Fallen Heroes Memorial Highway;"
- Strengthen sex offender notification requirements;
- Expand mortgage foreclosure and mediation assistance;
- Establish a "Silver Alert" system to help locate a missing senior citizen or mentally impaired adult;
- Expand options for Connecticut patients affected by Lyme disease and autism;
- Raise the school dropout age to 17, with parental consent;
- Increase bike and pedestrian access;
- Abolish restrictions on state land formerly set aside for a now defunct expressway through several area small towns; and
- Allow pet owners to establish trusts to provide for their pets' care.



Senator Boucher speaks
at the Fallen Heroes Memorial
Highway dedication ceremony



Redding First Selectman
Natalie Ketcham, Governor Rell,
and former Commissioner
of Environmental Protection
Gina McCarthy, with
Senator Boucher



Meanwhile, there were some legislative proposals that I was happy to help defeat, including initiatives that would have hurt our quality of life by:

- Decriminalizing the possession of marijuana; and
- Harming financial services institutions located in Fairfield County.

Healthcare Reform

Over the past several months, I have attended several community forums to discuss healthcare reform. Though our national debate continues, I agree with the many Fairfield County residents who believe it is in Connecticut's best interest to maintain private sector healthcare plans while providing state assistance to those who need help through the:

- **Charter Oak Plan**, which provides access to affordable health care coverage to Connecticut citizens of all income levels; and
- **HUSKY**, which offers a full health insurance package for children and teenagers up to age 19, regardless of family income.

Please contact me if you would like to know more about these state healthcare programs.

Senator Boucher and
Representative Joe Mioli (far right) present a
General Assembly citation to (left to right)
Westport Superintendent of Schools
Elliott Landon, Westport First Selectman
Gordon Joseloff, and Bedford
Middle School Principal Dr. Cary Bell



Recognitions & Honors

- Connecticut League of Conservation Voters - 2009 Environmental Champion
- Fairfield County Homebuilders Association - Woman of the Year
- Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance - Children's Champion
- General Assembly Voting & Attendance Record - 100%

Senator Boucher
with Wilton
First Selectman
William Brennan



Senator Boucher with Governor Rell,
Representatives David Scribner and John Stripp
and former State Senator Judith Freedman



STAY INFORMED:

Visit my website
SenatorBoucher.cga.ct.gov
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